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A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms, along its slippery way!"

And yet, the poet adds—

"I love thee still, unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art."

It is pleasant to see that the poet, although constrained to give all this severity of line and color to his portrait, can still retain a feeling of tenderness for his snowy-crowned old subject. Nor need we wonder much at this latent feeling in the old poet, for must he not have remembered those experiences of his younger manhood, when out of doors in the crisp December days, breasting the cold north winds with buoyant step, or skate on heel, emulating on the polished ice the concentric swiftness of the swallow in his summer evolutions on the wing? Only those who have the fortitude to step outside the glow and warmth of their winter homes, to face, on snowy uplands or through sheltered dells, the bracing keenness of the frosty winds, can ever know the healthfulness of such a walk, or realize the varied beauties of the landscape at this time of the year. The long continued nightly frosts have hardened all the surface of the ground to the consistency of iron, so that where the snow has left in spots the highways bare, you may hear from afar the ring of ironed hoof or hob-nailed shoe, as team and driver slowly wind their way across the view. You see the white roofs of the village, glinting through the leafless trees; and if, perchance, the bright December sun is out, the old church may catch the passing ray, and the metal weathercock upon the gable-pointed parsonage may shine like burnished steel. All about you in the near field of vision, the hoar-frost decks with silvery hue each thorny bush and tufted clump of withered grass; or, if the passing sunlight shimmers through the winter boughs above your head, it showers crystal sprays upon you, as it glints from stem to bough or through the mazy network of the interlacing twigs. Bright bands of sunshine rest upon the uplands, and edge with silver many a woodland copse or scattered hay-rick lonely in the whitened fields. Extend your walk abroad until the clouds begin to gather in heavy folds about the distant horizon, and the fir-off hill-tops lose their outlines in the murky veil; then turning homeward, mark the change, as all the air begins to thicken with the snowy mist. It is a change indeed! for now, but for the tiny wreaths of smoke curling above the cottage roof, it may hardly be distinguished from the blank grey settling down upon it. Near and familiar objects are rapidly losing all likeness to themselves in the thick incumbrance of the hueless air. Already the sound of near approaching wheels is deadened to the ear, while from the nigh copse, the sharp ring of the wood-chopper's axe comes at muffled intervals.

Softly now each tiny flake begins to fall; the school-boy will, ere long, reluctantly forsake his sport upon the village pond; the sportsman his less innocent amusement of the day; the curler only, in his keen enthusiasm, will make good his title to the ice, and hold his own amid the thickening flakes, until the gloom of night has driven him from his merry sport, and all the broad expanse of nature will

rest in silent peace within the white folds of the drifting storm. But if the brightest promise of a day may thus, throughout the season, end in many a foul, tempestuous night; let us not forget that summer has her terrors too; her scorching heats and long continued days and nights of feverish drouths, which are no more endurable in their way than winter's rudest cuffs. The winter is as charming to the true lover of nature as is any of the other seasons, and poets have never tuned sweeter lays to summer than those they have penned to celebrate the colder beauties of the winter time.

"Walk now among the forest trees,—
Said'st thou that they were stripped and bare?
Each heavy bough is bending down
With snowy leaves and flowers—the crown
Which winter regally doth wear.

"'Tis well—thy summer garden ne'er
Was lovelier with its birds and flowers,
Than is the silent place of snow,
With feathery branches drooping low,
Wreathing around the shadowy bowers!"

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